

Assessing the Implementation of Local-level Marine Resource Management Projects in Support of the Northwest Straits Commission Benchmarks

Jenny Hernandez

University of Washington, School of Marine Affairs

Abstract

In 1998, Congress authorized the Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative, providing funding to establish a system of Marine Resource Advisory Committees (MRCs) in the Northwest Straits region. The overall goal of the Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative is to reverse the decline of the region's marine resources through sound science and local-level support. The program is authorized for six years, and its progress will be measured by eight benchmarks to determine its re-authorization.

All seven MRCs focus on conservation priorities and activities in their respective counties. However, each differs in organization, process and the means by which they achieve the goals of the Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative. My research involves investigating the current criteria that MRCs use to choose their projects, identifying the elements of implementation, and exploring how their projects achieve the objectives set forth in the eight performance benchmarks. Recognizing the criteria for choosing projects and the elements of implementation can help identify MRC priorities for reauthorization.